

Create Your Own Life-sized *Acrocanthosaurus*

Classroom Activity

Grades 3-8

Skills Practiced

Math

- Drawing objects to scale
- Exploring positions on grids
- Solving spatial problems

Science

- Collecting and displaying data

Concepts Explored

- Size of dinosaurs

Sample Objective

Students will work together to create a life-sized drawing of a dinosaur.

Background

The concept of how big (or small) dinosaurs were is difficult for most people to grasp since there is no direct way to experience their size. Comparisons such as “*Apatosaurus* was three stories tall” or “*Compsognathus* was the size of a chicken” help us visualize the size of these ancient reptiles, but they fail to give us the personal experience that most of us need to fully appreciate the majesty of dinosaurs. By using the following activity to create a life-sized version of *Acrocanthosaurus*, students will become intimately involved with just how big *Acrocanthosaurus* really was.

Materials

- pencils
- clear tape
- masking tape
- location that will hold a 18' x 40' drawing of *Acrocanthosaurus*
- rulers
- black markers
- 4' x 4' pieces of blank paper (if paper this large is unavailable, you may tape together several smaller pieces of paper into a 4 foot square piece)
- *Acrocanthosaurus* picture with numbered grid overlay (included with this activity)
- old newspapers

Teacher Preparation

1. Make a copy of the *Acrocanthosaurus* picture overlaid with the numbered grid located on the reverse side of this sheet. You may want to enlarge the picture to make copying the drawing easier for your students.
2. Cut the copy along the grid lines, making sure that the grid lines do not appear on the cut-up squares.
3. Dispose of any square that does not have a number in the upper right-hand corner.
4. Draw a diagram of the numbered grid without the *Acrocanthosaurus* picture on it and post the blank grid where the students will be able to refer to it.
5. Assign each student a numbered square. Make a list of the numbers and record the names of the students assigned to each square. Post this list next to the blank numbered grid made during step 4.

6. Distribute the numbered squares to the appropriate students. Give each student a 4' x 4' piece of blank paper and make sure they all have pencils.

Activity

1. Instruct the students to copy in pencil the marks on their small squares onto the larger pieces of paper, making sure to include the numbers in the upper right-hand corners of the squares. Remind the students to use the entire piece of paper and to draw all the way to the edge of the paper.
2. Once each student has transferred the marks to the larger pieces of paper, they must check that their lines connect with the lines on adjacent grid spaces. Have the students refer to the list of grid numbers and student names and to the blank numbered grid posted on the wall to determine whose work adjoins theirs.
3. As soon as all adjoining marks have been checked and adjusted (if necessary), have the students go over the pencil marks (except the numbers in the upper right-hand corner) with black markers. To protect surfaces from the markers, you may want your students to place old newspapers underneath their papers before they use the markers.
4. Assemble the pieces of paper at the pre-selected location, using masking tape to secure the squares together. Your class now has a life-sized *Acrocanthosaurus*. If a suitable wall is available, display the *Acrocanthosaurus* on it so the students can fully appreciate how big this dinosaur was.

Extensions

Discuss with your students where and how *Acrocanthosaurus* lived. Based on this information, ask your students to imagine what *Acrocanthosaurus* might have looked like when alive. What color was it? Discuss camouflage and how it might have helped a predator like *Acrocanthosaurus* get closer to its prey before it attacked. Based on their ideas, have the students add color to their life-sized *Acrocanthosaurus*.

Continue the activity by designing a mural based around the enlarged *Acrocanthosaurus* drawing. Use the information and the drawings provided on the following pages to create the mural.

Compare the size of *Acrocanthosaurus* to that of people and objects around the classroom.